

A Comparative study on the cultural Differences of transnational remakes of movies and TV series

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Abstract: In cross-cultural communication activities, cultural discounts often lead to the reduction of the value of cultural products. What are the causes of this? How to reduce the cultural disincentives caused by cross-cultural communication? This is the main research problem of this paper. Firstly, this paper takes the film *Journey to the West*, which has been remade in many countries, as an example, and makes a comparative analysis of the cultural discount in the remade drama from four aspects: language, clothing, props and scene. Finally, it is pointed out that in order to reduce the size of this kind of cultural discount, we need to cultivate excellent translation talents, strengthen the international expression of local culture and strengthen the cultural proximity.

Keywords: Cultural discount, cross-cultural dissemination, Confucian culture, remake TV series

1 Introduction

In recent years, when all industries were "stagnant" due to the COVID-19 epidemic, the media industry began to "save itself" and media products developed wildly. Remakes such as the South Korean remake of "Shock of Every Step" and the Thai remake of "Legend of Zhen Huan" are sweeping Asian countries. We have observed that the remake will change the costume, performance and even lines of the characters, but the story narrative and discourse power cannot be reformed in the remake, so it is difficult to change the core of Chinese Confucian culture. Therefore, we can't help thinking about the following questions: can the remake play the effect of cultural exchange? In what way is the cross-cultural communication of the remake achieved? Will there be cultural discount in the propagation process of remake?

2 Literature Review

2.1 Literature review on the phenomenon of film and television drama remake

"Remake" is a term in photography technology, mainly refers to the process of restoring or copying photos, pictures, negatives, documents, etc. However, the definition of "remake" of film and television drama goes beyond the definition of "remake" of photography. It is no longer limited to the mechanical reproduction of pictures, negatives, etc., but has "creativity" component, which adds new characteristics to the remade films and television dramas.

Since the new century, along with the continuous development of the media industry, the phenomenon of film and TV drama remake has attracted the attention of many academic perspectives. Benjamin, a foreign scholar and a member of the Frankfurt School, made a general analysis of the changes in the value of works and the aesthetic changes of the audience caused by the reproduction of

works of art in the Age of Mechanical reproduction in 1963 in his *Works of Art in the age of mass culture*. The author takes the shock experience brought by art works in the era of mechanical reproduction, such as movies, as a hope to break the existing order and give the power of salvation to artistic events. In view of this, film and TV drama remake is actually the process of image "copy" and "reproduction".

On the other hand, in 2014, in *On the Recent Phenomenon of Remaking Domestic TV Series*, the scholars of Baiyika pointed out that the current situation of domestic remakes of TV series is shoalness, poor content and lack of characteristics from the perspectives of society, audience, market and so on, and argued that the remakes of domestic TV series should timely explore and absorb the essence of the original, and properly integrate into local characteristics. And need to pay attention to marketing strategy and increase the secondary development of film and TV drama market resources. However, in 2009, Wang Chunli, a domestic scholar, conducted a more detailed study in the *Cultural Roots and Sustainable Development of the "Remake Craze" of Domestic TV Dramas*, which showed that there are two cultural roots in the remake of TV dramas. One is the need to interpret classic works in different times. Combine classic works with The Times and reinterpret the classics in the new era. The second is the pursuit of the aesthetics of the TV series, the remake reflects the popularity and popularity.

However, although these researches are carried out from the aspects of domestic historical background and cultural roots, they ignore the aspects of transnational film and TV drama remaking.

2.2 Literature review on the phenomenon of transnational film and television drama remake

The phenomenon of transnational film and television drama remaking has aroused research from multiple perspectives in the academic world. In 2018, foreign scholar Ruth Gutierrez Delgado made an overall analysis of this specific form of adaptation in TV in the *Theory of Screenwriter*, pointing out that when adapting scripted TV formats, cultural characteristics must penetrate into a deeper level of narration and also into stories. But their execution is not intrinsically cohesive, and thus has narrative consequences that ultimately undermine the coherence of the new story.

Domestic scholar Chu Xiaoli conducted a more detailed study in 2021 in the *Nostalgic Fashion of Transnational Reproductions of Asian Films -- Taking The Film versions of Strange She in South Korea, China and Japan as the Object of Investigation*. Her research showed that the ultimate purpose of remaking the value of reproductions is to realize the "reconstruction" of shared meaning and establish cultural identity. Eventually, more universal cultural values will be formed. However, domestic scholars Guo Zhengzheng and Hong Fan in 2021 in *Cross-covering Reproduction and Environmentalism: A Preliminary Study on the Phenomenon of Transnational Remaking of European New Films* showed that under the circumstances that film story resources may be overexploited and the utilization rate is low today, remaking can be regarded as a new way of environmental economic benefits from the perspective of economics.

However, while these studies have studied the economic benefits of fashion and environmental protection, they have ignored the cultural differences of transnational remakes of films and TV series.

2.3 Literature review of cultural differences in transnational remakes of films and TV series

Since the theory of cultural discounting was put forward by Hawkins in 1988, it has been highly concerned by scholars at home and abroad and has achieved a lot of research results. In the *Influence of Cultural Distance on Online Brand Awareness* in 2021, foreign scholar Sankil Moon studied the

phenomenon of the influence of cultural distance on online brand awareness, and supplemented the theory that brand popularity is influenced by a country's cultural characteristics, cultural distance, interaction involving cultural distance and three factors.

In the Analysis of the Phenomenon of "Cultural Discount" in cross-cultural Translation of TCM from the Perspective of High and Low Context Theory in 2020, domestic scholars Xie Yuanyuan and Yu Zhenyao proposed to transform the form of TCM culture developed on the basis of high context culture. Supplement its inadequate context, make it more suitable for the low-context culture of the audience, and seek a more effective path for the cross-cultural communication of TCM. In 2022, Chinese scholars Lu Min and Chen Yan proposed in Cultural Sharing, Cultural Discount and Interpretation Deviation in International Communication -- Based on the Analysis of Overseas Audiences' Interpretation of Chinese Historical and Cultural Documentaries that copyright sales of Chinese documentaries in English version should be adjusted to gradually tilt towards global social media platforms instead of traditional media. The international communication of documentary will deepen the cooperation with new media and give full play to its current communication advantages. However, these studies did not study the phenomenon of cultural discount from the perspective of transnational film and television drama reproductions, so they did not answer the question about the cultural differences of transnational film and television drama reproductions.

2.4 Problem Raising

Therefore, based on the theory of cultural discount, this paper tries to answer the following questions: Can the remake play the role of cultural exchange? In what way is the cross-cultural communication of the remake achieved? Will there be cultural discount in the propagation process of remake?

3 Method

3.1 Content Analysis Method

3.1.1 Hypothesis Establishment

Based on the above problems, corresponding hypotheses are proposed here:

H1: The closer the Confucian cultural tradition is to China, the lower the cultural discount is.

In order to prove the hypothesis, this study adopted the content analysis method to sample the population and make a questionnaire.

3.1.2 Sampling Method

The corresponding research object of this hypothesis is films and TV plays containing Chinese Confucian culture. First of all, we carry out representative sampling of this kind of movie and TV series, and select the movie and TV series of Journey to the West. The reason for choosing it is that it has a strong influence, is one of the four great classics in our country, and has strong characteristics of Confucian culture, so it has strong representation. At the same time, Journey to the West remade by Japan and Australia is selected for analysis. Due to the geographical proximity of China and Japan, the cultural exchanges between the two countries must have a long history. Confucianism has become the most

prominent representative, affecting the development of Japan in the long history, and has even become an organic part of Japanese culture. Australia is an immigrant society, its culture is a derived culture, and its geographical location is far away from China, so the cultural exchange is less than that of Japan.

Secondly, the author conducted representative sampling of the works of Journey to the West from different countries based on the principle of proximity to Chinese Confucian culture. Because the foreign remake of Journey to the West did not completely follow the domestic plot trend, the author compared the Japanese and Australian remake of Journey to the West with changes in lines, content and costumes. The Australian version of Journey to the West -- The New Legend of the Monkey King has 20 episodes in two seasons, while the Japanese version of Journey to the West has 11 episodes in 2006. The plots of six episodes are selected randomly according to the proportion for comparison.

3.1.3 Category construction

In this study, the size of the variable cultural discount is reduced to a country far from Chinese Confucian culture, and the close degree of the variable Confucian culture is reduced to the similar degree of lines, makeup and props. The following table is made. In this study, the author uses content analysis method to analyze the differences between the Australian and Japanese remakes of Journey to the West and the Chinese version of Journey to the West, and compares the similarity between the two countries' remakes and the Chinese version of Journey to the West from the aspects of makeup, discourse, props, scenes and diversity plots. The higher the score, The closer the similarity is.

Table 1 The coding result of the Australian version of Journey to the West -- The Legend of the Monkey King

category	unit	Sample episode						
		Episode 3 Season 1	Episode 6 Season 1	Episode 9, season 1	Episode 3, season 2	Episode 6, season 2	Episode 9, Season 2	Average score
Character image	Clothing style	3	3.5	3	4	3.5	3	3.33
	Costume color matching	2.9	4	3	4	3	3.2	3.35
	character	4	4	4	4.3	3.5	4	3.97
	Average score	3.30	3.83	3.33	4.10	3.33	3.40	3.55
Discourse pattern	Language style	4.3	4	3.5	4	4	3	3.80
	Line connotation	4.5	4	4	4.2	3.7	4	4.07
	Average score	4.03	3.94	3.61	4.10	3.68	3.47	3.81
prop	Scene decoration	4	3	3	3.5	3	3.2	3.28
	weapon	4.5	4	4	4	3.5	4	4.00

	Average score	4.18	3.65	3.54	3.87	3.39	3.56	3.70
scene	location	3.5	3	3	3.5	3	3.2	3.20
	color	3	4	3.5	4	3	4	3.58
	Field of view	3	3	3	3.5	3.2	3.8	3.25
	Average score	3.17	3.33	3.17	3.67	3.07	3.67	3.34

Table 2 Coding results of Japanese version of Journey to the West

category	unit	Sample episode						
		Episode 1	Episode 3	Episode 5	Episode 7	Episode 9	Episode 11	Average score
Character image	Clothing style	8	8.2	8.1	7.9	8.1	8	8.05
	Costume color matching	8.4	8.3	8.5	8	8.4	8	8.27
	character	7.6	7.5	7.6	7.5	7.3	7.2	7.45
	Average score	8.00	8.00	8.07	7.80	7.93	7.73	7.92
Discourse pattern	Language style	7.5	7.6	7.7	7.6	7.6	7.8	7.63
	Line connotation	8.5	8.4	8.4	8.3	8.2	8.2	8.33
	Average score	8.00	8.00	8.06	7.90	7.91	7.91	7.96
prop	Scene decoration	8.2	8	8.1	8	7.9	7.9	8.02
	weapon	7.8	8	8	7.9	8.1	8.2	8.00
	Average score	8.00	8.00	8.05	7.93	7.97	8.00	7.99
scene	location	8.5	8.2	8.4	8.2	8	7.9	8.20
	color	8.4	8.2	8.1	7.9	8.1	8	8.12
	Field of view	8.5	8.3	8.4	8.2	8.2	7.9	8.25
	Average score	8.47	8.23	8.30	8.10	8.10	7.93	8.19

4 Research findings and discussion points

4.1 Differentiated cultural backgrounds affect the expression forms of cultural products

Due to cultural differences, remakes differ in architecture, makeup and other aspects. To some extent, there is a phenomenon of cultural discount. As can be seen from Table 1, the average score of the Australian version of The Legend of the New Monkey King is 3.55 points for makeup, 3.81 points for discourse, 3.34 points for scenes, and 3.70 points for props. Judging by the scoring standard of this code, The Australian version of The Legend of the Monkey King bears less resemblance to the Chinese version of Journey to the West. Especially in the scene dimension, for example, in some forest scenes, the Australian version uses the shrubbery with local characteristics, while the Chinese version uses the broadleaf forest scene. For example, in terms of architecture, Australia adopts the architectural styles of North America and Europe, while China adopts the retro Chinese architecture.

Fundamentally, these differences in architecture and makeup and other aspects are because films

and TV series are spiritual products, which need to meet people's spiritual and cultural needs, so there are differences between different cultural backgrounds in different regions, which also leads to changes in costumes, shapes, lines and other aspects of the remade films and TV series. Therefore, there will be cultural discounts when foreign countries remake Chinese movies and TV series. The remake of TV series still tries to localize as much as possible from the aspects of role selection and styling collocation, so as to meet the taste of local audiences, but at the same time, it also causes the problem of cultural discount of Chinese Confucian culture in cross-cultural communication.

Cultural discount also has a huge impact on cross-cultural communication, among which ideological values are the important existential significance of films and TV plays. Different films and TV plays deliver different ideological values to the audience in different contents and ways, and on this basis, cultural discounts will also be produced in different degrees. In terms of line translation, in the process of cross-cultural communication, the translated lines of the script often fail to convey the meaning, which is difficult to restore the cultural connotation and color, and even causes serious misunderstanding among overseas audiences. There are many similar cases, and I will not repeat them here.

4.2 Cultural discount and cultural tradition are opposite and complementary

Despite the differences between different cultures, the cultural discount for remakes of films and TV series in culturally similar regions is greatly reduced. Countries with similar cultural traditions can better convey the voice of China through the medium of film and TV series remake and realize cultural exchanges between countries. The total average score of the Japanese version of *Journey to the West* is 7.92 points for characters, 7.96 points for discourse, 8.19 points for scenes and 7.99 points for props. Judging by the scoring standard of this code, the Japanese version of *Journey to the West* and the Chinese version of *Journey to the West* are relatively similar. Especially in terms of scenes and props, the Japanese version of *Journey to the West* greatly restores the Chinese version of *Journey to the West*. This is mainly because the culture of Japan and China is close to each other. Therefore, the Japanese remake of Chinese movies and TV series is less in terms of role image building, scene design and other external expressions and lines. At the same time, through research, we found that the Australian version of *Journey to the West* and the Japanese version of *Journey to the West* have great differences in character images, discourse patterns, props and scenes. For example, the Japanese version of *Journey to the West* is similar to the Chinese version of *Journey to the West* in terms of costume props, while the Australian version of *Journey to the West* is quite different from the Chinese version in terms of costume props. Its costume props tend to be Western sports and entertainment elements, with more casual characteristics.

It can be seen that because Japan has similar cultural traditions with China, its expressions and cultural connotations are very different from those of Chinese films and TV dramas, while Australia, a country with a far different cultural background from China, will inevitably make a large number of adaptations to adapt to its local culture and local audience's taste when reproducing films and TV dramas related to Chinese culture. Similarly, *Legend of Zhen Huan* is the most representative Chinese drama in the recent boom of Chinese TV dramas. It ranks first in the audience ratings after its broadcast. But as *Legend of Zhen Huan* spreads abroad, there is also a huge cultural discount. Firstly, it is reflected in the translation of script lines. Language is a very important medium carrying information in the process of cultural transmission. In the Qing Palace opera, there are many ancient lines and complicated titles of harem characters. In the process of translation, it is often difficult to keep the artistic charm while being loyal to the original work. In the *Biography of Zhen Yuan*, there are officials and women, promises, and

so on, and there are Empress, imperial concubines, and imperial concubines, etc. Except for the Empress who has corresponding 'Empress', other translations were not satisfactory and could not show rank and rank. For example, Shen Guiren translated it as "Lady Sher" and Consort Hua translated it as "consort Hua". Second, reflected in the viewing habits. In the US, there are almost no dramas such as Legend of Zhen Huan, which lasts for 76 episodes. The average American TV series lasts about 500 minutes and 10 episodes. When Legend of Zhen Huan arrives in the US, it is cut to six episodes (about 540 minutes), which greatly reduces many important plots and fails to highlight the interconnected plots of the original TV series, so that it is finally defined as a cliché history of imperial revenge, which is not very good in the US ratings. Finally, it is reflected in the difference of cultural background. Under the feudal system, the imperial palace of the Qing Dynasty had a rigorous and orderly system. The etiquette, custom and rule of etiquette displayed in the play make foreign audiences feel fresh, but also difficult to understand and accept, let alone the names and titles of the characters in the play. The cultural discount generated above greatly reduces the effect of cross-cultural communication of Chinese films and TV dramas.

However, foreign films and TV dramas explain the cultural connotation of China with foreign cultural thinking, which also transmits Chinese stories to another cultural group to a certain extent, and thus generates cultural collision and breeds new cultural achievements.

4.3 The key to telling good Chinese stories is to reduce cultural discounts

At present, films and TV plays are becoming more and more popular in various countries for cross-cultural communication. However, in this form of cross-cultural communication, it is necessary to pay attention to the phenomenon of cultural discount in the process of cultural communication.

In this process, it is not advisable to convey the plot, sensationalize and distort the character image. Attention should be paid to the cultural connotation contained in the film and television drama. Combined with the cultural background of the country, the author has a deep understanding of its cultural connotation, and through the collision and integration with the native culture, the author creates the existence of the original country's cultural core without losing the connotation and style of the native culture. So that the cross-cultural communication between countries with movies and TV plays as the carrier can achieve effective communication effect.

First of all, we need to cultivate excellent translation talents. The report to the 18th National Congress points out that good translation can help Chinese culture go global. Only by reducing the cultural discount of language in cross-cultural communication can the content conveyed by TV series be accurately expressed, and the language expression habits of overseas audiences should also be taken into account. Only in this way can overseas audiences understand and even accept the content expressed by Chinese films and TV dramas, experience the linguistic charm and profound connotation of Chinese culture, and truly enhance the soft power of Chinese culture, which is a particularly important step in the cross-cultural communication of Chinese TV dramas. Second, strengthen the international expression of local culture. In order to reduce cultural discounts, enter the vision of overseas audiences and be accepted or even attracted by overseas audiences, Chinese films and TV dramas must learn the entertainment habits of overseas audiences, have the awareness of production and adaptation of cross-cultural communication, and satisfy the viewing habits of foreign audiences in the forms of production and broadcast. In terms of the broadcast content and form of television, production agencies should make up for the difference in the production of domestic and foreign TV series by changing the length, number of episodes and narrative mode of TV series, reduce cultural discounts, provide excellent local international

expression, be in line with international standards, and be recognized by overseas audiences. Only in this way can the cross-cultural communication effect of Chinese TV series be improved. To achieve the goal of better going global for Chinese culture. Finally, we should strengthen cultural proximity. The famous French director Rene Clair once said, "The audience is not necessarily right, but the writer who ignores the audience is certainly wrong." In the process of cross-cultural communication, Chinese TV dramas should produce cultural products that meet the aesthetic and interest points of audiences in different regions. Or find the common ground of different audiences' emotions and values, guide the audience to ignore cultural differences, emphasize cultural proximity, reduce the cultural discount of Chinese TV plays in cross-cultural communication, so as to better export our cultural products to the whole country.

5 Summary and reflection

Through content analysis method, this paper studies the cultural discount theory on the cultural differences generated by transnational remakes of movies and TV series, trying to answer the question of whether there will be cultural discount phenomenon in the transmission process of remakes. Through the research, it is found that the closer the cultural tradition of the country to China's Confucian culture, the lower the cultural discount, while the farther away the country from China's Confucian culture tradition, The higher the cultural discount.

This study points out that cultural discount is closely related to the cultural differences of different countries, which reflects the different development of transnational film and TV drama remaking. On the other hand, it also provides ideas for remaking movies and TV plays in different cultural contexts of modern China. However, it is worth noting that this study also found that the phenomenon of transnational film and television drama remake will bring about cultural distortion, dissemination, demonization and other negative effects, which is worthy of vigilance and reflection.

However, due to the small number of countries involved in the remaking of Journey to the West, this study has a single cross-cultural dimension and cannot fully study the differences in cultural discounts caused by different cultures in different countries. In future studies, researchers in the field of cultural discount theory may need to pay more attention to the multi-dimension of cultural discounts caused by countries with different cultures. And extended cultural discounting research and practice.

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